



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/655,743	09/06/2000	Alice H. Howe	MPH 99-46	9068
7590 01/04/2005			EXAMINER	
M Paul Hendrickson 403 Main Street P O Box 508 Holmen, WI 54636-0508			CHIU, RALEIGH W	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3711	

DATE MAILED: 01/04/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/655,743

Applicant(s)

HOWE, ALICE H.

Examiner

Raleigh Chiu

Art Unit

3711

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

Art Unit: 3711

DETAILED ACTION

1. Under authority of the Technology Center 3700 Director and in view of newly discovered U.S. Patent Number 6,401,997, prosecution is hereby reopened under 37 CFR 1.198.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

3. Claims 1-7, 9, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over one of U.S. Patent Number 4,834,393 (Feldi) or French Patent Number 2,594,037 (Musslin) and either in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,077,870 (Melbye et al., hereinafter Melbye), U.S. Patent Number 6,401,997 (Smerdon, Jr., hereinafter Smerdon) and applicant's admission of prior art (AAPA)..

Regarding claims 1-7, 9, 10 and 12, Feldi discloses the combination of a tennis racquet equipped with a ball-retrieving attachment attached to the shoulder of a racquet wherein the ball-retrieving attachment can be a hooked fastener material such as VelcroTM.

Musslin discloses another tennis racket having a hook fastener 3,4 configured to engage with the covering of the

Art Unit: 3711

tennis ball. Musslin further discloses that "forms, dimensions and positions of the different elements, and the type of material used for the hooks could vary (change) within certain limits, without changing the general conception of the described invention" (last paragraph at page 3 of 4 from the English translation).

Melbye teaches that VelcroTM and ScotchmateTM were art-recognized equivalents in their use as hook-and-loop fasteners in the racquet art at the time of the invention. See column 1, lines 15 et seq. It would have been obvious to substitute a ScotchmateTM fastener in either the Feldi or Musslin racquet since Melbye teaches the equivalence of VelcroTM and ScotchmateTM fasteners and the selection of any of these known materials to form the fastener would be within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

Further, while it is noted here that none of Feldi, Musslin or Melbye discloses the recited hook size parameters such as monofilament diameter, hook height, hook width or hook depth, it is also noted that Smerdon teaches the use of hook-and-loop fasteners to removably attach a beverage tube to the side of a bicycle handlebar stem. Moreover, Smerdon discloses that those hook-and-loop fasteners should maintain good adhesion in wet and warm condition and examples of such fasteners are the

Art Unit: 3711

Scotchmate™ SJ3526 fasteners. See the bridging paragraph between columns 11-12.

It further should be noted that tennis is generally considered to be an outdoor sport. In fact, among the sports' most famous tennis tournaments include Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, both of which are outdoor events that are played in wet and warm conditions. Wimbledon starts in the early summer in England and the tournament is well-known for its hot, wet and damp conditions; the U.S. Open occurs at the end of the summer tennis season in Flushing, New York and it is known for its hot and humid conditions.

Therefore, given the facts that (1) Feldi, Musslin and Melbye teach the concept of using hook-and-loop fasteners such as Velcro™ or Scotchmate™ with tennis racquets to retrieve grounded tennis balls; (2) tennis is often played in wet and warm conditions; and, (3) Smerdon explicitly discloses the preference of Scotchmate™ SJ3526 fasteners for their strong adhesive performance in wet and warm conditions, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use Scotchmate™ SJ3526 fasteners in either the Feldi or Musslin racquets as modified above for the purpose recognized by Smerdon as discussed above.

Art Unit: 3711

Regarding the exact specifications of the Scotchmate™ SJ3526 fasteners, AAPA discloses that Scotchmate™ SJ3526 fasteners are in fact the preferred fasteners of choice and therefore such a substitution would naturally meet the disclosed dimensions of hook width, depth, diameter and density. See AAPA at page 5, lines 9-17 of the instant specification.

4. Claims 8, 11 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Feldi or Musslin in view of Melbye, Smerdon and AAPA and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 4,993,712 (Urwin).

Regarding claims 8, 11 and 13-15, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to place the ball-retrieving attachment between the three and nine o'clock positions of either the Feldi or Musslin racquet as modified above in view of Urwin who teaches at column 4, lines 8-13 that a ball-retrieving attachment comprised of hook-and-loop fasteners can be placed anywhere along the outer surface of the racquet frame.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Art Unit: 3711

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Raleigh Chiu whose telephone number is (571) 272-4408. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Greg Vidovich, can be reached on (571) 272-4415.

The fax number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Raleigh W. Chiu
Primary Examiner
Technology Center 3700

TC 3700 Director Authorization to reopen prosecution after BPAI decision under 37 CFR 1.198:

RWC:dei:feif
20 December 2004